

Minutes of Rothbury Parish Council meeting held on Wednesday 11th June 2014 in the Jubilee Hall Rothbury commencing 730pm

Those Present: Cllr M Gilson (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Walklett, Cllr Mrs Dawson, Cllr Mrs Edes, Cllr Mrs Noble, Cllr Bridgett, Cllr Hesler (arrived part way through the meeting), Cllr Roberts, Cllr Reynolds, four members of the public

72/14 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

73/14 Welcome to Debbie Noble, Elected Cllr

Newly elected Debbie Noble given a warm welcome.

74/14 Police Presence

8 crimes reported in Coquetdale from 30/4 to 2/6, including criminal damage to bench at Beggars Rigg, with enquiries made and CCTV footage inspected. Four crimes to date in June, with a domestic incident at Addycombe area with a male arrested, and sentencing due. Campaign underway regarding vulnerable persons, and areas of vulnerability should be reported to police. Damage to ancient stone at Lordenshaw had resulted in a local male being cautioned. Uninvited telephone calls an ongoing nuisance. Local person throwing eggs in the street to appear in court. Local farmers contacting Cllr Bridgett regarding numerous farm break-ins which appear to be a growing epidemic. Police confirmed rural crime is no higher than this time last year, Cllr Bridgett aware rural farm crime is higher this year and awaiting FOI confirmation on this. It was agreed discussions should be carried out with PC/police representation at a later date to discuss farm thefts.

75/14 Public Questions

- Neil Ingham, 2 Police Houses Addycombe, wished to follow up his question from the Annual Assembly regarding trees planted at Whitton View. Cllr Bridgett, in his NCC capacity, is to meet with Planning Officer in charge, with site visit to be carried out. Tree Preservation Officer invited and Neil Ingham also welcome. Area is of potential concern, with detrimental effect in terms of light and water drainage from the allotments.
- Robin Murray wished to speak about the pipe band, explaining it had been reformed in 1954, first playing again 1955, and renowned throughout the county and further afield, playing in numerous events. For the village to show appreciation, Robin asked if the PC would like to take the lead in recognising its 60th year in 2015. Two original band members are still a part of the current group. A commemorative figure, whether in stone or wood, a display board, tree sculpture or commemorative bench discussed as options. Fund raising could be banked through the PC. Cllr Gilson prepared to drive this suggestion, however are the band in agreement? Robin had not spoken personally to the band, but had contacted villagers for their opinions. Cllr Noble did have contacts regarding commemorative benches, and more than happy to lead. David Brown of pipeband thought a wonderful suggestion and would inform the band. Working group to be established.

76/14 Minutes of the meeting held 14th May 2014

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true record after minor amendments.

Draft minutes of Annual Assembly displayed, PC cannot ratify those minutes as assembly is not a PC meeting.

77/14 Matters Arising

77/14.01 Chairman's Announcements

Meeting held with complainant and his wife yesterday to look at annual accounts, with comments expected. From a personal point of view Cllr Gilson did not think it went too badly, and is 100% satisfied no fraudulent behaviour is going on behind the scenes of the PC.

77/14.02 Urgent Business

None.

77/14.03 Parish Clusters

Next meeting 19/6/14.

77/14.04 Bridge Works

To be taken off agenda.

77/14.05 Whitton View Development

No official name for Phase Two. New development would not include any play facilities, and in lieu of this a contribution for play facilities and sport within the village would be allocated, with Section 106 agreement being negotiated. Football Club, Recreation facilities and play areas already in existence to be earmarked for improvements. Present Whitton View park is utilised well, and with

new development may require extending, however Northumberland Estates would need to action this. There seems to be reasonable provision for younger children and young adults, but there appears to be a gap for early teens.

77/14.06 Northumberland County Council Local Development Framework

Next draft to be circulated August then consultation period.

77/14.07 Civic Event Sub-Committee

Tree planting underway, volunteer grasscutting sought. Some form of apprentice scheme to aid in gardening and cemetery works for the PC to be researched which would be organised through Kirkley College.

77/14.08 Crises Management

No information on pilot work at Morpeth.

77/14.09 Ten Year Plan/Funding Sources

As most issues are being dealt with elsewhere on the agenda, item to be taken off. Additional allotment proposals being prepared.

77/14.10 World War One Commemorations

Trench dug outside Parish Hall discussed, which had been dug with the right intentions, being for the cubs as a commemoration and should stay as it is with remedial works carried out after commemorations. War Memorial sprucing up/masonry works should be actioned, Cllr Bridgett through NCC members scheme prepared to offer matching funding, and overhanging tree requiring attention. However tree had been cut back within the last two years. Cllr Gilson to liaise with M Boag and S Hunter.

77/14.11 Parking

Resident of Addycombe requested a long standing issue with a caravan parked be discussed, however it is parked on NCC land who had not reported it as an issue when Enforcement Officers had attended site. Cllr Roberts to speak to concerned residents.

77/14.12 Armstrong Cross

Repair to be pursued vigorously, concerns over leaching at bottom, rough figure for repair given. With the weight of stone, age, scaffolding, lifting tackle etc, would result in major financial impact. English Heritage permission would also be required. Cllr Gilson to lead on.

77/14.13 Member of Public Complainant

ICO contacted, and it was understood no legal or lawful reason why MOP details should not be processed, together with why and what he is doing. Correspondence from resident Sheena Cummings read out regarding leaflets distributed by T Kell, who had spent an hour canvassing to Sheena, and informed her fraudulent activities were taking place within the PC with a figure of tens of thousands quoted, alleging members of RPC were hiding funds, and the clerk withholding information. T Kell had been extremely persistent in the allegations, with Sheena being outraged at the accusations. A further letter received from Mrs M Hammond, who had been speaking with a resident about the By-Election who had hinted at fraudulent activity going on behind scenes at RPC. Mrs Hammond concerned no more time or resources are wasted over one parishioner who appears to have a vendetta with the PC. Letter then read out which had been written by the clerk to Chairman covering several points in Tony Kell's second manifesto, 'The Facts,' which appeared to be exaggerations, spiteful innuendo and mis-truths and potentially damaging to all on RPC. There is now potential libelous information being put forward which is untrue, and it had become imperative the PC seeks legal advice. It was thought beyond the stage of advice, as it is now slanderous. Details of three local specialist firms had previously been forwarded from Liam Henry, and Cllr Bridgett would pass these details to Cllr Gilson. These latest issues could potentially be extremely damaging to all members of the council. It was minuted MOP had now reported RPC to the police. With regards to cost, should be fairly assured these can be reclaimed if matter taken to court. Proposal given by Cllr Bridgett to reluctantly approach three firms for free legal advice, further to then employing one for representation, seconded by Cllr Roberts, 8 in favour, one abstention. Cllr Noble had also received comments/heresay intimating fraudulent behaviour.

Further correspondence received from MOP's solicitor which had been forwarded to clerk and most Cllrs, however it was agreed this would not be read out but left in legal hands. Cllr Gilson had contacted the police regarding the allegation in the letter T Kell had reported RPC to the police. It was understood NCC staff had also been informed they had been reported to the police.

77/14.14 Neighbourhood Management

Discussions regarding village survey/play areas etc to be carried out.

77/14.15 Electric car charging points

Correspondence had been received from Val Miller, Cragside Estate, stating they had electric points which could be passed to RPC, however they were not the type agreed for village green. It was agreed this item would be taken off the agenda.

77/14.16 Community Journalism

Deferred.

78/14 Planning

78/14.01 Planning Applications had been received for the following:

Cllr Bridgett declared an interest as a member of NCC Planning Committee.

- 14/01511/FUL: Mr Hunt, Ballachan, Hillside – single storey extension
- 14/01640/VARYCO: Mr D Smith, Variation of Condition 2, land between 10 & 14 Blaeberry Hill
- 14/01577/FUL: Mr C Oakey, conversions of two storey outbuilding, Linden Cottage

78/14/02 Approval of Planning Application had been received for the following:

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- 14/00746/FUL: Mr M Arkle, land south of Rothbury Golf Club House – retrospective, machinery store
- 14/00770/FUL: Mr F Wells, Heatherlea Cottage, resubmission of 13/00196/FUL, replace existing extension and convert ground floor
- 14/01148/FUL: Mr E Jensen, The Gernel, garage/greenhouse

80/14/03 Other Planning Matters

None.

79/14/04 Neighbourhood Plan

- Working group held with NCC planning and representatives of Cartington, Thropton, and Whitton & Tosson PC's. A formal agreement, with RPC the lead PC proposed by Cllr Walklett, seconded by Cllr Bridgett, agreed. Aims, objectives and steering group to be agreed. Local development can be attempted to be controlled with a neighbourhood plan.

80/14 Financial Matters:

81/14/01 The following invoices were authorised:

- UCCT - May bus hire - £20.00
- Cumbria Clock Co – annual service - £198.00 – informally M Boag had suggested church take over the clock
- SLCC – membership - £87.00
- Lee Charleton – removal of rook nests - £45.00
- C Miller, quarterly salary & expenses - £948.04
- NCC – Garden waste bin - £24.00
- M Evens – gardening/grass cutting - £550
- RHT DCC – rent of parish hall - £12.00

82/14/02 Any other financial matters

- **Internal Audit Report y/e 31/3/14:** Copies circulated to all Cllrs..
- A year ago the Internal Audit Annual Framework had been agreed, with RPC due to carry out various duties, however finance sub-committee to meet before July PC meeting, where this can be discussed further. Certain tasks have to be carried out throughout the year with a requirement to review internal audit systems and controls; how the review is carried out; the internal audit standards which involves internal audit duties carried out throughout the year and done according to Standing Orders and Financial Standing Orders, and the need to decide on the scope and extent of internal audit, ensure internal auditor clear on the terms of his work and has a copy of SO's. RPC had exchanged correspondence and held meetings with IA so he is aware of his duties. Conclusion should be recorded in minutes and any changes recorded. Need to try and keep to the rules, although they may appear onerous to smaller PC's. Slight amendment to budget planning paper, to add in VAT and an amendment to figure on shoppers bus. Total column not added as this is not a formal account, but a forecast. Information to be placed on board and web-site. Precept increase discussed, NCC appear to be using a different calculation as regards increases, is in fact 96.5% increase for RPC, not 132%.

83/14 Unitary Councillor Report

- Resurfacing to commence end of month in front of Rothbury House once drainage issues resolved from Gravelley Bank, and in front of Newcastle House and Alderson's, with other areas around the village to be finished off.
- Main roadworks at Cragend had commenced, press release possible from NCC in near future.
- Broadband: new telegraph poles towards Thrum Mill, but not connected to fact residents are receiving broadband. Traffic lights broken and road dug up in this area with access issues, NCC to be contacted. Cabinet feeding top end of village to be activated late June.
- Deputy Leader NCC allowing capital budgets to be converted into revenue for World War I commemorations.

84/14 Health & Safety at PC Meetings

To be moved to top of agenda.

85/14 Rothbury Pipe Band 60th Anniversary

Discussed earlier

86/14 Correspondence

86/14.01 Elaine Grundy, Helen McCallum, Teresa Wilson – in support of 60th anniversary pipe band celebration

86/14.02 NCC – Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 14, Gravelly Bank

86/14.03 NHS Clinical Commissioning Group

86/14.04 R Spotwood - resurfacing

86/14.05 A Kell – request to view accounts y/e 31/3/14 – carried out

86/14.06 J Richardson – budgeting – Cllr Gilson read out letter – J Richardson had been informed request for answer refused at Annual Assembly which she had asked a neighbour to read out. (It was agreed all correspondence received by any Cllr be circulated to the rest of RPC). Budget detail required, with further concerns unable to open web-site spreadsheet, the opinion insufficient accounting procedures in place, wishing for further information on all forecast projects, and asking how PC intends to be more transparent with request full letter be read out at tonight's meeting. Cllr Gilson had replied and read this out, which indicated the question had been answered at the Annual Assembly; details of precept rise given; details of budget difficulties; information on items precept raise will cover and transparency;

86/14.07 NCC – Love Northumberland Awards 2014

86/14.08 NCC – Parish Meetings July 2014

86/14.09 H Lister – road at west end of village, Rothbury House and areas W and E – repairs discussed earlier

86/14.10 S Cummings – By-Election – discussed earlier

86/14.11 CPRE – newsletter

86/14.12 J Wood – bunting

87/14 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Rothbury Parish Council will be held on Wednesday 9th July 2014 commencing 730pm in the Jubilee Hall Rothbury.